## The Mysterious Monogram

By Howard P. Rockey Copyright 1914 Howard P. Rockey

broken," Harcourt said firmly.

"Impossible!"

"Why impossible?" asked Harcourt. \*Because it would then look as though we were giving you up-as if son?" we had lost faith in you. Jack, if you ever needed the friendship and support of those who care for you it is now. You have worked yourself wanted to be sure." up needlessly over this. We were all fond of Towney-he was a good soldier and a lovable fellow-but that is convinced that my suspicion was a no reason why we should lose our mistake." Half way down the stairs heads."

night!" Harcourt broke in.

"Nonsense!" Sir Thomas broke in. pose you were intoxicated-is that tive. any reason why you should do anythink like this?"

"I can't believe it-yet-

impatiently. "Do you carry stillettes me." about with you like an anarchist or Harcourt was conscious of the keen an Italian bandit?"

you carrying a knife for ?"

but I had right enough, and there was the crime. blood on my clothing, too." "Jack!"

like a crazy man., Perhaps you enrealizing what you were doing."

Harcourt shook his head. "It would fact-if it were true."

"But this has not been mentionedto anyone?" Sir Thomas asked.

"Only my valet and Dickey Carcourt said.

"Then see that no one cise does him the whole story."

"No," said Harcourt. "I shall do nothing of the kind. Of course I am omences of my act-if this act was

"Do as you like," said Sir Thomas. "But if you will not consider yourself you at least owe something to Grace. Do you realize that it would break her heart if snything happened to you as a result of this?"

"Yes. And it would kill her if she ever learned-when it is too latethat I am a murderer!"

Sir Thomas shuddered and drained his brandy and soda. "Don't talk like that," he said, shaking his head. "It's

"That is why I feel it best to break the engagement until I have cleared voice. my name," said Harcourt.

told him firmly.

is cleared up-if it continues much longer—the suspense, the uncertainty the time they were absorbed." Mac- pression of pain. "You haven't---" of it all, will make a mental wreck of Bee looked fixedly at Harcourt as he

"It will if you persist in entertain- warded. ing such absurd notions," Sir Thomas

objected. "If I only knew the truth the dinner to save my life." He effect liquor was beginning to have on guilty-if I had what might seem of his words dawned upon him. "Nor ulty-the failure to recall a single good reason-I might even attempt to am I forgetting for the same pur- happening while I was under the infree myself of suspicion. As it is and I shall be the center of it. I said MacBee. don't think I am a coward, but I don't know how long I can stand it, and I at out the room, apparently looking "No," said Harcourt, looking away certainly do not intend to drag the carefully here and there, but in reality from her. "I remember nothing." publicity."

"Jack," said Sir Thomas, and there Harcourt leaned over the table and were traces of tears in the old man's gazed curiously into an ash tray. eyes, "please don't think that I do not appreciate the spirit that prompts you to say all this. I admire and honor you for it. But I believe in you thoroughly-even though you cannot be-Meve in yourself. Grace feels as I do. Go to her and talk the whole thing insist upon anything she does not wish."

Harcourt stood undecided for a time. Then he looked up and smiled. Treatest effort that he preserved his "I'll do it," he said. And the two composure, and in that moment his tered. men clasped hands.

In the doorway, Sir Thomas paused | tion stood him in good stead. a moment. "Jack," he said quietly, "I have just thought of something that should have occurred to me before. You had another object in asking for that roll call-an object other than

tell us all your own feelings. Am I sign he had noticed carved into the right?"

"Yes," said Harcourt.

"Do you want to tell me that rea- of his great coat.

"No. I was wrong."

"You suspected someone?" "I had an idea-a mere notion: I "And now you are sure?"

"Not altogether-but I am almost they encountered inspector MacBee. "I only wish I hadn't lost mine last "Ah, Lord Harcourt," he said pleasantly, "I was just looking for you." "I am entirely at your service," said "You take a foolish view of it. Sup- Harcourt, pausing beside the detec-

"I was also on my way to look at the smoke room where-the affair of last night occurred. I was wondering "Yet nothing!" said Sir Thomas if it would interest you to accompany

scrutiny of the inspector. He thought, "I had one last night," said Har- too, that he understood the man's purpose. He had heard of the famous Sir Thomas looked at him in amaze- "Third degree," through which prisment. "You-what the devil were oners are often put by the police, and he was firmly convinced that MacBee had brought back with him from In-"I wish I knew-in fact, I didn't bound that he might betray some sign dist. know I had it until this morning- of guilt if brought to the scene of

"Now, do you wonder why I said none of the repugnance he felt at en- a moment. Over the mantle was a what I did in the governor's room?" toring the room, nor did his manner group of scimitars and queer custern Sir Thomas was silent for a mo- betray the slightest hesitation. "I wennons Sic Thomas had collected ment. "I begin to understand," he assume that you have no objection to during his term of foreign service,

even us Scotland Yard men."

be difficult to convince a jury of the smoke room, and MacBee unlacked At the sound of a footstep behind the door, standing aside for them to him he turned and saw Grace. She

in which it had been discovered when eyes, but she came forward cagerly rington know anything of it," Har- the body was found. The chairs were with a smile on her face and both placed just as they had been, the car- hands extended in happy greeting. pet was marked with ashes here and "It has been such a long day," she know," Sir Thomas advised. "You'd there, and the trays on the table were said. "I thought you would never better engage counsel at once and tell full of burnt-out cigars and cigar- come." lettes.

Without being directed to it, Harcourt and Marston at once glanced at a great deal to do," not going to deliberately slip my head the big chair by the table where the into the noose by telling what is un- body had been found. Against the necessary, but, on the other hand, I dark leather of the seat was a great do not intend to evade the conse- stain of darker hue, mute evidence of word. the gruesome object that had last oc cupied it.

"I have made a most thorough examination," MacBee said, as he closed her, and she looked anxiously into his the door behind them. "As far as I face, have been able to discover, there is not the slightest clue remaining-no that concerns us?" she asked nervousingerprints, no lost belongings-nothing. Frankly, it is the most perplex-

ng situation I have ever faced." "You have arrived at no concluion?" Major Marston asked

"None, I was wondering, Lord Harcourt, if you could recall anything rank nonesense, but it gives me the that took place in this room immediately before you left it,"

"Nothing," said Harcourt, in a low

"Not with my consent." Sir Thomas this sort suggests things that had You know the old weakness of the slipped the memory-that remain in Harcourts-the one thing that made "But do you realize that until this the mind even though the brain was you hesitate -not conscious of those impressions at

nose," he added lightly.

"I am convinced of that, my lord,"

Then the detective began walking talked with Towney?" woman I love into the mire of such watching Harcourt closely. Once he topped and glanced up quickly as lice-"

chaps have on their eigarettes," Har- It was a difficult thing to explain to court observed as he picked up and her, yet he knew he must do it and examined a half consumed paper of do it then. tobacco. Then he carelessly tossed he thing into the fireplace and moved dear? The fact that I do not rememaway, not even MacBee suspecting the ber-and other things, of which I canover, but promise me that you will not shock the finding of that monogram- not even tell you-makes me wonder med cigarette had given him.

But to Harcourt the insignia was full of meaning. It was only with the habitual calmness and lack of emo-

It was a curious monogram that aggested to him none of its possible significance-a strange device unlike

inything Harcourt had ever seen.

"But the engagement must be the mere feeling that you ought to itself into his brain. It was the same ivory hilt of the dagger Fergus had discovered that morning in the pocket

CHAPTER IV.

Further Doubts.

From the club, Harcourt rode quickly to the Marston house in his brougham. Sir Thomas had remained at the club with MacBee, and Harcourt was zlad that he had done so, for he was trying as best he might to associate he monogramed cigarette with the lagger locked up safely in his own

spenly carried such a marking would hastily delivered the following: ase, to commit murder, a knife so easily identifiable.

His reflections were cut short, however, as the motor drove up before Grace's home, and he walked quickly op the steps to be admitted by Bajhab, the old Sepey servant Major Marston

Harcourt smiled at the Indian in his quaint native castame, and with a sa-"Certainly, I will go," Harcourt con- laam: Bajhab led him to the library, sented quickly. His tone betrayed saying his mistress would be there in Capital said. "But at that you are acting Major Marston's accompanying us," and Harcourt stared at them fascin-"None whatever," said MacRee. "I ated. He had often seen and examtered the room after poor Towney was shall be glad to have him. Often an Incel the swords, but this afternoon killed and picked up the thing-not and soldier sees things that escape they made him shudder, for the mere sight of them suggested what he Turning, they passed back to the would have given anything to forget.

was simply dressed, and there were The place was in the same disorner traces of weeping in her great blue

"I could not get away any sooner," Harcourt explained. "There has been

"And is there any news? Have they found the-She paused, hesitating to speak the

"Nothing yet," Harcourt said, "Sit down here. I have something I want igan Poultry Breeder, Battle Creek, Mich.

to say to you." "Something in his tone frightened

"There is nothing wrong-nothing

"Yes, something that concerns us very much. I suppose you are familiar with the details of this affair?" "Father has told me, and I have road all the newspapers," she said. "You know then that I was the last nan seen with poor Towney?"

Ves." "Then I want you to try to under stand what I am going to say, and to "Sometimes the return to a scene of realize what it costs me to say it.

"Oh, Jack!" she cried with an ex-"Yes, dear," he said, taking her spoke, but his steady gaze was unre- hand in his. "Last night-for the first time since I gave you my promise not "It is all a blank to me," Harcourt to touch it -1 drank too much. You went on, "I could not tell you a single remember, I told you a long time ago "You don't understand." Harcourt thing that happened after the close of that I had become frightened at the paused and smiled as the suggestion me, the absolute loss of mental facfluence of it? That is what happened last night."

"Then you don't remember having

"Then you cannot help the po-

Harcourt turned and looked into her eyes. He saw that she did not realize "Curious monograms some of these the significance of what he had said,

"Can't you see what the result is,

She seemed to divine his meaning and looked at him in terror. "You-you can't mean-" she fal-

"I do mean-just that. It is possible -I may have been the man!"

With a start of terror she drew back or a moment. Then with a laugh she caned forward and seized both his rands. "Jack, you dear old silly! Yet, in an instant the thing burned How can you say such a thing? Are Rd., Cleveland, Ohio.

you serious or are you merely trying to frighten me?"

"I only wish I were," he said tenderly. "I wonder if a man was ever placed in such a position before? 1 don't believe I did it-I can't think so-but until I can know certainly, I want you to release me from our engagement."

(To be continued)

Good Reason to Cry.

Mother-Tommy, what's the matter with your little brother?

Tommy-He's crying because I'm eating my cake and won't give him

Mother-Is his own cake finished? Tommy-Yes'm, and he cried while was eating that, too.

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> "Oh, Lord, bless this food to our use, and may this meat make us all strong men!"

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